

Float first

How to Float first

15 minute pool session

Designed for families, swim schools, pools and open water providers the 'How to *Float first*' pool session can be added to your existing programme or run as a standalone.

Float first gives you the best chance of survival if you're in trouble in the water. Whether you fall in or get caught in a river current or coastal rip, knowing how to respond in the first two minutes can be the difference between life and death.

Watch the 'How to *Float first*' video for a clear understanding of the 4 steps:
www.dpanz.org.nz/float-first/#video

Our free DPA eLearning video will provide additional content for teaching floating activities: <https://www.dpanz.org.nz/lessons/stationary-surface-competencies>

Materials required:

- Milk bottles provide additional flotation whilst learning how to float, without making the learner too buoyant
- Improvised flotation – everyday items can be used to assist flotation. These include: a large bottle, ball, chilly bin, bucket or lunch box
- Old clothes or pyjamas can be used to extend the learning by running floating activities with clothes on.

How to Float first: Float, Breathe, Signal, Survive

Why is it important to float first?

Responses to cover:

- Floating allows us to be calm and relaxed
- It helps us to get our breathing under control
- It means we can keep our mouth and nose clear of the water so that we can breathe
- Not everyone can swim but floating takes less energy if we know how to do it
- It can take around 2 minutes for the panic or cold water shock to pass

1) FLOAT first

- Lie back with your ears underwater, chin up
- Move your hands to help you float
- It's okay if your feet sink
- Ignore your instinct to swim

Practice floating and experiment with different positions. Everyone can learn to float, either on their own or with gentle sculling.

- Students can try the different floating shapes that can help them to float on their back
Try these shapes: T, I, X, Y for the best floating position
- Remember that not everyone needs to float in a horizontal position, it's okay if feet sink
- Use milk bottles in each hand and stretch out arms to support learning for beginners.

2) BREATHE normally

- Relax
- Slow your breathing to help calm down
- Breathing will get easier

What do you think you should do next? Introduce the next steps:

3) SIGNAL for help

- Raise your arm
- Shout for help

4) SURVIVE by swimming or floating

- Swim to safety if you can
- Float when it's not safe to swim
- Hold onto anything that helps you float
- Keep clothes on to stay warmer

Students can experiment with the different types of improvised flotation to assist in keeping afloat.

Use survival swimming strokes to conserve energy when swimming to safety. Watch the DPA eLearning <https://www.dpanz.org.nz/lessons/swimming-and-propulsion/>. This will provide a good basis for teaching survival strokes.

A fun pool event - Flash float

Run a fun event at your pool, you can also raise money to support drowning prevention work at DPA.

Set a time when the whole pool can float together for 90 seconds. 60-90 seconds is the average time it takes to recover from cold water shock or panic when you *Float first*.

90 is also the number of lives lost to drowning in 2023.

Anyone can drown, no one should. If we can teach everyone to *Float first* we can give them a chance to live.

Drowning prevention learning and resources

Professional Learning and Development in schools

We offer PLD within the education sector, to assist schools in developing aquatic education programmes, in line with the NZC (2007) expectations. We can support your teachers to deliver quality aquatics education with in-class and in-pool teaching and resources. Your school does not need to have a pool to provide an aquatics programme. Email: Lynley Stewart, lynley.stewart@dpanz.org.nz

DPA Lifejacket Hubs (Auckland and Waikato)

If any students need to borrow a lifejacket they can find their closest [DPA Lifejacket Hub](#). DPA also loan lifejackets to school and community groups.

FREE Online Water Safety Modules

We have a free eLearning platform for all ages to learn more about how to stay safe around water. It covers a range of water-based activities. Check out our [eLearning platform](#).

SPLASH Holiday Programme

Check out our one day [school holiday programme](#) for 8-11 year olds!